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MEMORIAL

FROM

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

AND

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE

MISSOURI TERRITORY,

ON THE

SUBJECT OF THE DEFENCELESS SITUATION

OF

SAID TERRITORY;

AND

PRAYING THE AID OF CONGRESS

IN

THE DEFENCE THEREOF, &c.

JANUARY 31, 1815.

Read, and ordered to lie on the table.

WASHINGTON:

A. AND G. WAY, PRINTERS.

1815.

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RESOLUTIONS.

Resolved, unanimously, by the legislative council and house of representatives, That it is their duty to make a faithful statement of what, in their opinion, is their present situation, and that a memorial to that effect be forwarded without delay to the congress of the United States, praying for a sufficient number of troops, not only to repel aggression but also to carry on active warfare in the heart of the enemy's country.

Resolved also, unanimously, That for the above purposes the following memorial be adopted, and that the governor of this territory be requested to forward the same to our delegate in congress who is requested to lay the same before the congress of the United States; and also, to use his best endeavours to have the same carried into effect.

MEMORIAL.

To the senate and house of representatives of the United States of America in congress assembled:

The unanimous memorial of the legislative council and house of representatives of the territory of Missouri,

RESPECTFULLY REPRESENTS:

That taking into view the situation of this country, which we confidently believe to be particularly critical and dangerous at this time, and that it will be still more so the ensuing season, your memorialists believe that they would not do justice either to themselves or their country, although assembled at this time for the particular purpose of legislation, were they to delay the present opportunity of informing the general government of their situation, and most earnestly soliciting their early attention thereto.

Notwithstanding their particularly exposed and frontier situation, of course to be especially affected by reason of a declaration of war against Great Britain, your memorialists beg leave to assure the general government that they are warm supporters of that measure which they believe ought not and could not, consistent with the honor and dignity of the United States, have been longer delayed; they believe it to be the only certain means of procuring a sure and permanent peace with the numerous tribes of Indians between whom and the United States they were the only barrier. Your memorialists were filled with joy when they learned that the government was preparing and fitting out an expedition, to be commanded by the hero of Sandusky, against Michilimackinak, the grand

depot of British goods and the theatre of their influence with those tribes whom they engage to harass and disturb our frontier; but whilst your memorialists were indulging the fondest hopes for the success of this important measure, they were suddenly disappointed by learning of the failure of the expedition. The ill success of this measure was followed by the taking of Prairie Du Chien by the enemy, a position which we believe his excellency the governor of this territory had taken in consequence of the movement against Mackinak, hoping thereby to be enabled to bring home to the good people of this territory more speedily and certainly, the happy effects that could not fail to have been the result of a successful attempt on Mackinak. About this time also, the reinforcements sent up the Mississippi, by brigadier gen. Howard, for the relief of Prairie Du Chien, were attacked by the enemy, almost two hundred miles nearer us than that post, and compelled to return with great loss: in the train of this list of evils, followed the loss of general Howard himself, and the ultimate abandonment of fort Johnson, a post taken by him nearly opposite the mouth of the river De Moine to prevent any rapid and grand descent of the enemy by water. It is furthermore stated, and your memorialists believe with truth, that fort Clarke, at Peoria, is in such a situation at this time as must insure a surrender to the enemy, or an abandonment of the post, if, indeed, this last step be practicable. With this succession of past events, unfortunate in their tendency towards these frontiers, your memorialists are filled with regret when they reflect that they see no prospect in the future more pleasing, unless from the timely and parental interference of the general government. It will, we trust, be needless for us to inform your honorable body, that these events have caused a union of nearly all, if not the whole, of the tribes of savages residing on the waters of the Illinois and Mississippi rivers against us, and that from information we believe en-

tirely worthy of credit, they have been amply furnished by the British with arms and ammunition. It now only remains for the enemy to succeed in their attempts to gain over the Missouri Indians to their wishes to have formed against us a coalition so formidable as to defy resistance by any force we can draw into the field.

Your memorialists are informed from authority which cannot be doubted, that a junction of the Mississippi and Missouri Indians would enable the enemy to bring into the field against us a force of at least six thousand savages. To oppose this formidable army, it appears, by the returns from the inspector and adjutant general's office, we have only an effective force of about three thousand four hundred militia; one third of the whole number of which it also appears from said documents, have actually performed active service during the present season; and this force, inconsiderable as it is, and without arms, is scattered over a distance of country five or six hundred miles in extent. Thus situated, your memorialists beg leave, most respectfully, to ask, what resistance they could be expected to oppose to any sudden descent or invasion by the enemy, if made in force? The answer is obvious: before the militia could be collected from such a distance, supposing no obstruction whatever to be opposed in assembling them, the enemy would have wreaked his vengeance on our defenceless settlements and fellow-citizens, destroyed such portions of their property as they did not risk to bear off, and be out of the reach of retribution if otherwise practicable. From the above statement of facts, it appears that the people of this territory have not been backward in turning out for the defence of their country, and even for the purpose of carrying the war into that of the enemy's: but should the British succeed in arraying against us the friendly tribes on the Missouri, as above apprehended, or should they bring into the field against us even the half of those Indians

who are at present hostile to us, residing on the Illinois and Mississippi rivers and their waters, your memorialists are convinced, that the whole of our settlements north of the Missouri, must give way, and that river form the boundary between us and the Indian country.

Your memorialists beg leave to express their profound regret, that nearly the whole of what few regular troops were in this country have been ordered away. They hope and believe that as much may be calculated on from the militia of this territory, as that from any other section of the United States, situated as they are. Indeed, they might perhaps venture to express their belief, that no part of the United States or their territories, have had the same number of its citizens for the same length and number of times, on active and frequently distant service as this territory: but your memorialists are persuaded that this cannot long continue to be the case. The spirit of the militia will become harassed and broken by too frequent calls on their patriotism, and ultimately, but few we fear, will be found willing to shoulder a musket in defence of a country of such an immense value to the United States, but which they will unquestionably see abandoned if attacked by all the force the enemy can easily bring against it, or taken from them by conquest, than the last of which your memorialists could not conceive of a greater political misfortune that could befall them.

Your memorialists do, therefore, most earnestly and respectfully solicit the attention of the general government to our situation, and that an adequate force of regular troops, if to be had, and if not, an equivalent in militia of the neighboring states and territories be ordered for our protection, to afford us an opportunity of shewing to the world our zeal and attachment to the government of the United States, and the folly of an attempt to recolonize this country by any of the powers of Europe. We earnestly solicit the general

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government not to suffer us to fall into the hands of our enemies, but to send us such a force as will not only enable us to protect and cherish our young and flourishing settlement, but render us the most effectual means of defence to carry the war into the enemy's own country. We do believe, that an active campaign might be carried on in their country with the double effect of distressing and destroying them, and protecting our settlements at the same time. We also pray, that Congress would cause to be forwarded arms sufficient for the use of our militia.

JAMES CALDWELL,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

WILLIAM NEELY,
President of the Legislative Council.

St. Louis. December 26, 1814.

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